

REMARKS

Claims 14 and 16-28 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, independent claims 14 and 28 are amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 15. Claim 15 is canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 16, 18, 19, 22 and 25-27 are amended to depend from claim 14. Claim 17 is amended to be to correct a minor informality. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 15-27 contain allowable subject matter, and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. As discussed above, independent claims 14 and 28 are amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 15. Thus, independent claims 14 and 28 are allowable.

II. Claim Rejection

The Office Action rejects claims 14 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Kohketsu et al. (Kohketsu), U.S. Patent No. 6,792,917. The rejection is rendered moot by the amendments to claims 14 and 28.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 14 and 16-28 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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